



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00826-T]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to supersede Airworthiness Directive

(AD) 2018-09-09, which applies to certain Airbus Model A318 series airplanes and Model A319 series airplanes; all Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and all Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. AD 2018-09-09 requires modifying the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at certain areas of the left-and right-hand wings. Since the FAA issued AD 2018-09-09, additional affected configurations were identified and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work and revised compliance times are necessary. This proposed AD would retain the requirements of AD 2018-09-09 and add airplanes, require different compliance times for certain airplane configurations, and, for certain airplanes, require additional modifications or reduce compliance times, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For EASA material that will be incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this IBR material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this IBR material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-1063.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, any comments received, and other information. The

street address for Docket Operations is listed above. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00826-T” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend the proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this proposed AD.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each

page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Discussion

The FAA issued AD 2018-09-09, Amendment 39-19266 (83 FR 19925, May 7, 2018; corrected May 15, 2018 (83 FR 22354)) (AD 2018-09-09), which applies to certain Airbus Model A318 series airplanes and Model A319 series airplanes; all Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and all Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. AD 2018-09-09 requires modifying the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at certain areas of the left- and right-hand wings. The FAA issued AD 2018-09-09 to prevent fatigue cracking in the stringer attachment holes of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings.

Actions Since AD 2018-09-09 Was Issued

Since the FAA issued AD 2018-09-09, additional affected configurations were identified to be subject to this widespread fatigue damage and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work or revised compliance times are necessary.

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2021-0167, dated July 14, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0167) (also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -

122 airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -215, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. EASA AD 2021-0167 supersedes EASA AD 2017-0117, dated July 7, 2017 (which corresponds to FAA AD 2018-09-09). Model A320-215 airplanes are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability.

This proposed AD was prompted by a report indicating that additional affected configurations were identified to be subject to widespread fatigue damage and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work (such as, for certain configurations, oversizing certain additional holes, replacing a certain fastener with a corrosion-resistant fastener, or cleat refit and sealant procedure) or revised compliance times are necessary. The FAA is proposing this AD to prevent fatigue cracking in the stringer attachment holes of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Explanation of Retained Requirements

Although this proposed AD does not explicitly restate the requirements of AD 2018-09-09, this proposed AD would retain all of the requirements of AD 2018-09-09. Those requirements are referenced in EASA AD 2021-0167, which, in turn, is referenced in paragraph (g) of this proposed AD.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2021-0167 describes procedures for modifying the stringer attachments at rib 2 through rib 7 of the left- and right-hand wings. The modification includes oversizing the holes, doing an eddy current inspection of the affected holes for damage, and repairing damage. EASA AD 2021-0167 also specifies additional work for airplanes on which the modification actions were accomplished using certain service

information. This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, the FAA has been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is proposing this AD because the FAA evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2021-0167 described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD.

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2021-0167 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2021-0167 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2021-0167 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to "all required actions and compliance times," compliance with this AD

requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2021-0167. Service information required by EASA AD 2021-0167 for compliance will be available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-1063 after the FAA final rule is published.

Explanation of Compliance Time

The compliance time for the modification specified in this proposed AD for addressing WFD was established to ensure that discrepant structure is modified before WFD develops in airplanes. Standard inspection techniques cannot be relied on to detect WFD before it becomes a hazard to flight. The FAA will not grant any extensions of the compliance time to complete any AD-mandated service bulletin related to WFD without extensive new data that would substantiate and clearly warrant such an extension.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this proposed AD affects 1,446 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs for required actions

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Retained actions from AD 2018-09-09	125 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$10,625	\$26,260	\$36,885	\$41,901,360 (1,136 airplanes)
New proposed actions	125 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$10,625	\$1,520	\$12,145	\$17,561,670

The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the cost estimates for the on-condition actions or the additional work for certain previously modified airplanes, as specified in this proposed AD.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by:

a. Removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2018-09-09, Amendment 39-19266 (83 FR 19925, May 7, 2018; corrected May 15, 2018 (83 FR 22354)); and

b. Adding the following new AD:

Airbus SAS: Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00826-T.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected Airworthiness Directives (ADs)

This AD replaces AD 2018-09-09, Amendment 39-19266 (83 FR 19925, May 7, 2018; corrected May 15, 2018 (83 FR 22354)).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus SAS airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (4) of this AD, certificated in any category, as identified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0167, dated July 14, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0167).

(1) Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes.

(2) Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes.

(3) Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes.

(4) Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, Wings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report that additional affected configurations were identified to be subject to widespread fatigue damage at certain stringer attachments and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work is necessary. The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent fatigue cracking in the stringer attachment holes of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2021-0167.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0167

(1) Where EASA AD 2021-0167 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2021-0167 does not apply to this AD.

(i) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or responsible Flight Standards Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-

AMOC@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer:* For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) *Required for Compliance (RC):* For any service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0167 that contains RC procedures and tests: Except as required by paragraph (i)(2) of this AD, RC procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(j) Related Information

(1) For information about EASA AD 2021-0167, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. This material may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-1063.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@faa.gov.

Issued on December 3, 2021.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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